

What is claimed is:

1. A system for coordinating the distribution of products from a plurality of product suppliers to consumers in a network environment, comprising

a graphical consumer interface configured to display product information for products from a plurality of suppliers and to receive consumer product orders from consumers to suppliers for products of a plurality of suppliers; and

an order flow controller configured to selectively route consumer product orders for one or more products of a given supplier to said given supplier or to one or more retailers identified by said given supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

2. A system for coordinating the distribution of products from a product supplier to consumers in a network environment, comprising:

a graphical consumer interface configured to display product information for products from said given supplier and to receive consumer product orders from consumers to said given supplier for products of said given supplier; and

an order flow controller configured to selectively route consumer product orders for one or more products of said given supplier to said given supplier or to one or more retailers identified by said given supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

3. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the order flow controller is configured to not accept consumer orders for one or more products of a given supplier in accordance with that supplier's selected fulfillment policy.

4. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the order flow controller is configured to route consumer product orders for one or more products of a given supplier to a product order

list accessible by said given supplier or by one or more retailers identified by said given supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

5. The system of claim 4, further comprising a back room manager configured to remove product orders from the product order list upon receipt of a fulfillment acceptance indication from a retailer or supplier.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the back room manager is configured to enable the given supplier to fulfill selected product orders identified on the product order list.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the back room manager is configured to enable the given supplier to fulfill selected product orders identified on the product order list only after a preselected period of time has passed since the product order was received.

8. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the consumer interface is configured to display price and availability information for the products of each of the suppliers organized by product category.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising a search engine configured to enable a consumer to search through the products of a given category by supplier, by product type, by product feature, or by a combination of two or more of these identifiers.

10. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the consumer interface is configured to enable a consumer to display selected product representations in a separate scratch pad window.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the consumer interface is configured to enable a consumer to remove product representations from the scratch pad window.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein the consumer interface is configured to

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enable a consumer to drag a selected product representation from a product previews window to the scratch pad window,

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the consumer interface is configured to enable a consumer to initiate a product order from the scratch pad window or from the product preview window, or from both windows.

14. The system of claim 1 or 2, further comprising a price filter configured to transmit product price information and product availability information to the consumer interface.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the price filter is configured to transmit supplier specified product prices.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the price filter is configured to transmit retailer specified product prices during certain supplier selected periods of time.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the price filter is configured to transmit only a selected number of the lowest retailer specified product prices.

18. The system of claim 1 or 2, further comprising an escrow account manager configured to retain consumer payments for a selected period of time and to distribute retained funds.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the escrow account manager is configured to distribute retained funds to an entity that shipped a product to a consumer.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the escrow account manager is configured to distribute funds retained for a given product order to a supplier that fulfilled the given product order, one or more retailers identified by that supplier, or to a combination of

supplier and one or more of said retailers.

21. A method for coordinating the distribution of products from a plurality of product suppliers to consumers in a network environment, comprising:

providing a graphical consumer interface configured to display product information for products from a plurality of suppliers and to receive consumer product orders from consumers to suppliers on behalf of a plurality of suppliers;

receiving consumer product orders for products of one or more of the plurality of suppliers from consumers to suppliers; and

selectively routing customer product orders for one or more products of a given supplier to said given supplier or to one or more retailers identified by said supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

22. A method for coordinating the distribution of products from a product supplier to consumers in a network environment, comprising:

providing a graphical consumer interface configured to display product information for products from a given supplier and to receive consumer product orders from consumers to said given supplier on behalf of a said given supplier;

receiving consumer product orders for products of said given supplier from consumers to said given supplier; and

selectively routing customer product orders for one or more products of said given supplier to said given supplier or to one or more retailers identified by said given supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

23. The method of claim 21 or 22, wherein consumer orders for one or more products of a given supplier are not accepted in accordance with that supplier's selected fulfillment policy.

24. The method of claim 21 or 22, wherein consumer product orders for one or more products of a given supplier are routed to a product order list accessible by said given supplier or by one or more retailers identified by said given supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising removing product orders from the product order list upon receipt of a fulfillment acceptance indication from a retailer or supplier.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising enabling the given supplier to fulfill selected product orders identified on the product order list.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising enabling the given supplier to fulfill selected product orders identified on the product order list only after a preselected period of time has passed since the product order was received.

28. The method of claim 21 or 22, wherein price and availability information for the products of each of the suppliers are displayed organized by product category.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising enabling a consumer to search through the products of a given category by supplier, by product type, by product feature, or by a combination of two or more of these identifiers.

30. The method of claim 21 or 22, further comprising enabling a consumer to display selected product representations in a separate scratch pad window.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising enabling a consumer to remove product representations from the scratch pad window.

32. The method of claim 30, further comprising enabling a consumer to drag a selected product representation from a product previews window to the scratch pad window.

33. The method of claim 32, further comprising enabling a consumer to initiate a product order from the scratch pad window or from the product preview window, or from both windows.

34. The method of claim 21 or 22, further comprising transmitting product price information and product availability information to the consumer interface.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein supplier specified product prices are transmitted.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein retailer specified product prices are transmitted during certain supplier selected periods of time.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein only a selected number of the lowest retailer specified product prices are transmitted.

38. The method of claim 21 or 22, further comprising retaining consumer payments for a selected period of time and to distribute retained funds.

39. The method of claim 38, further comprising distributing retained funds to an entity that shipped a product to a consumer.

40. The method of claim 38, further comprising distributing funds retained for a given product order to a supplier that fulfilled the given product order, one or more retailers identified by that supplier, or to a combination of supplier and one or more of said retailers..

41. A method for coordinating the distribution of products from a plurality of
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product suppliers to consumers in a network environment, comprising:

posting a second product order on an order fulfillment page corresponding to a first product order received from a consumer to a given supplier for a product of said given supplier, said order fulfillment page being accessible by said given supplier or by one or more product retailers identified by said supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier, wherein said first product order contains product order information of said consumer;

transmitting said product order information to said given supplier or retailer upon receipt of a fulfillment acceptance indication of said second product order from said given supplier or retailer; and

purging said second product order from said order fulfillment page after receiving said fulfillment acceptance indication.

42. A method for coordinating the distribution of products from a product supplier to consumers in a network environment, comprising:

posting a second product order on an order fulfillment page corresponding to a first product order received from a consumer to a given supplier for a product of said given supplier, said order fulfillment page being accessible by said given supplier or by one or more product retailers identified by said supplier in accordance with the selected fulfillment policies of said given supplier, wherein said first product order contains product order information of said consumer;

transmitting said product order information to said given supplier or retailer upon receipt of a fulfillment acceptance indication of said second product order from said given supplier or retailer; and

purging said second product order from said order fulfillment page after receiving said fulfillment acceptance indication.

43. The method of claim 41 or 42, further comprising, after a selected period of time after said second product order remains posted without receiving a fulfillment acceptance indication, the step of transmitting said product information to said supplier and purging said second product order from said order fulfillment page.

44. The method of claim 41 or 42 wherein said first and second product order contain said product order information.

45. The method of claim 41 or 42 wherein said second product order contains less information than that contained in said first product order.

46. The method of claim 43 wherein said first and second product order contain said product order information.

47. The method of claim 43 wherein said second product order contains less information than that contained in said first product order.